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Optical Disk Storage at Naval Research Laboratory

The Ruth H. Hooker Technical Library is located at the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) in Washington, DC. It provides information service to the Laboratory in the areas of physics, chemistry, oceanography, electronics, metallurgy, optics engineering and intelligence. The Documents Section of the Library has one of the largest report collections in the Navy Library System and since 1945 has received and fully catalogued over 580,000 documents.

The Documents Section was created in 1945 when it was thought that the end of World War II meant the end of document production by government agencies and contractors. The existing documents at NRL were gathered together to form an archival collection. It was believed that once the collection was organized it would not grow very much. This proved not to be the case. Document production by government agencies and government contractors continued to increase until the growth in the numbers of these documents peaked around 1975.

Libraries desperate for space began to look for media other than paper to store documentation. The Ruth H. Hooker Library started a collection of microfiche as a partial solution. The collection continued to grow until the Section housed 350,000 documents in hard copy and 900,000 microfiche. Space continued to be a problem.

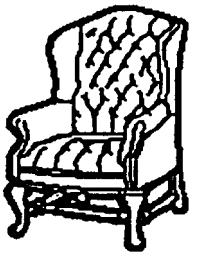
The emergence of optical disk technology provided a bright light almost too good to believe. Putting the full text of documents onto optical disk is the siren song of state-of-the-art technology. Retrieving full text at the touch of a key or two is a heady experience—an experience especially thrilling to those of us who have climbed dusty shelves to retrieve even dustier documents. Optical storage is undeniably a technology which will sooner or later find its way into any library that can afford it.

The Documents Section presently has the full text of 13,000 documents averaging 65 pages per document stored on optical disk. These documents are now permanently filed and immediately accessible. Maintenance costs of this collection are negligible as there is no necessity for filing on the shelf nor for shelf inventory. Also the problems of mis-filing and of finding additional space for storage are permanently eliminated.

The staff of the Documents Section is now considering new technology that will enable us to network the informa-

—continued on page 3

from the Chair .....



I am pleased and excited to assume the office of MLD Chairman. I look forward to your help in making 1990-91 a special year for MLD. As I said to many of you in Pittsburgh, I am extremely fortunate to be following in the footsteps of Barbara Fox.

Barbara has given us a vision of what the Division should be: an organization that anticipates its members needs and works proactively to meet them. She has implemented that vision by working to increase member involvement in committees, by establishing a broad-based long-range planning committee and by surveying the membership on what direction they would like to see the Division take. I want to see us continue the good work she has started. But this can only happen with your participation and assistance.

Please take a moment to think about what you can do for MLD, then call me or one of the Officers or Committee

—continued on page 2

CALENDAR NOTES

ALA Midwinter, 11-17 Jan 91
Chicago Hilton & Towers
Chicago, IL

SLA Mid-Winter, 23-25 Jan 91
Washington, DC

Computers in Libraries, 10-13 Mar 91
Oakland, CA

ASIDIC, 17-19 Mar 91
Catamaran Resort Hotel
San Diego, CA

National Online Meeting, 7-9 May 91
Sheraton Centre Hotel
New York, NY

SLA Annual, 8-13 June 91
San Antonio, TX

ALA Annual, 29 Jun-4 Jul 91
World Congress Convention Center
Atlanta, GA

ASIDIC, Sep 91
Boston, MA

MLW, Oct 91
Monterey, CA

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Optical Disk Storage at NRL

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tion stored on the optical disk system to the individual offices of NRL scientists. Scientists will be able to search the database to identify the documents that they would like to see and then will be able to see or print out those documents immediately without leaving their offices.

Conversion to optical disk storage is not a task to be taken on lightly. Before converting, major decisions must be made as to the choice of hardware, software, vendors, etc. Those making the decisions must be well aware of the current technology. The cost in money for hardware and software and manpower for conversion is considerable.

The optical disk system installed in the Documents Section consists of an autochanger (jukebox) capable of holding 50 12-inch optical platters, each platter with a capacity of 6.55 gigabytes of information; a minicomputer with two workstations; an optical scanner; three personal computers; two printers and miscellaneous equipment such as surge protectors.

Documents are retrievable by typing their accession numbers into a user-friendly menu on the screen of a UNIX workstation. More than one document may be displayed on the screen at one time. Any page, range of pages or the full document can be printed by pressing a function key. All operations may be controlled by a mouse if the user is so inclined. Patrons as well as Library staff can become quickly proficient in the retrieval of documents from the optical disk system.

Ongoing scanning is being done in-house and by a contractor. The full text of all of the Documents Section's 100,000 unclassified documents is to be converted to optical disk and stored in the existing autochanger. Future plans call for the Documents Section's 250,000 classified documents to be scanned and stored in a second autochanger.

Further information about the Ruth H. Hooker Library optical disk system is available by calling DSN: 297-3367 or (202) 767-3367.

—Doris Folen,
Naval Research Laboratory •ML•

ROBOTICS AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE DATABASE

The Naval Ocean Systems Center (NOSC) in San Diego has developed the Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Database (RAID) which is fully operational and available to authorized users. The objectives of RAID are to serve as a centralized knowledge base for government sponsored robotics and artificial intelligence (AI) projects, to promote coordination of effort and technology transfer in all branches of the government and to serve as an analytical tool for identification of critical research areas.

This database is available free-of-charge and is accessible online to authorized users nationwide via the MILNET/DDN. In addition, there is a report generation service which allows authorized users to request reports via telephone or electronic mail.

Data for RAID is collected from a variety of sources including the Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC), technical conferences, workshops, principal investigators of projects and periodicals. The accuracy and currency of the data is verified with the principal investigator yearly.

RAID allows users to search the database using multiple fields,i.e., title, keywords, applications, sponsoring organization, funding level, etc. Searchers may gather information on robotics and AI workshops or conferences, obtain the name and telephone number of the project point-of-contact, identify areas of expertise of principal investigators, read robotics and AI-related news online, send announcements to multiple users electronically, and print reports.

To become a RAID user, an individual must be a government employee or a government contractor. There is no charge to authorized RAID users. For further information contact Mike Dwyer, NOSC Code 936, (619) 553-5308 or DSN: 553-5308 or Judi Graham, Computer Sciences Corporation (619) 225-2511.

—Judi Graham, CSC •ML•